

REMARKS

Amended claims 1 and 24 are supported by the embodiments described in connection with Figs. 3-11.

Amended claims 18 and 41 are supported at least by the embodiments described in paragraph 61.

Responding to page 2 of the Office Action, the rejection of claims 9, 11, 27 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph is respectfully traversed. The examiner states that the specification does not mention "another player" locating a player. This statement is respectfully traversed in connection with new claims 64 and 65 as stated below. Regarding claims 9, 11, 27 and 28, the phrase objected to by the Examiner has been removed from claims 9 and 27. The applicants respectively request that the rejection be withdrawn. Claims 9 and 27 still are limited to displaying an identification of the location of the player. None of the known cited references teaches or suggests such a feature, and claims 9 and 27 are allowable on this ground alone.

Regarding new claims 64 and 65, the examiner's attention is directed to paragraphs 42 and 43 of the specification (page 16) that read:

[0042] Player preferences may include preferences for drinks, cigarettes, snacks and the like. In addition, memory 121 may store a preference authorizing the player to be located by having central authority 120 correlate his player ID number with the gaming location at which his club card 152 was read.

[0043] When central authority 120 locates a player, it sends data to station 132 via network 126 that results in an electronic or printed display. For example, a printed display may result in a map 136 printed by a printer

138 attached to the station. Alternatively, the map may be displayed on display 134. The map provides a floor plan of the casino or other facility in which system 100 is located, the location of the service station and the location at which card 152 was entered in a card reader, such as gaming location 102.

The examiner's attention also is directed to Fig. 14 that shows a message sent from John Smith to John Doe as explained in paragraphs 0060-0062 (pages 24-26):

[0060] The player causes controller unit 119 to generate an appropriate message by entering the name of a person for whom the message is intended (e.g., John Doe), a game location (e.g., 106) or player ID number, and a message, such as "MEET ME AT THE RESERVATION DESK AT NOON," by touching display 118 at the appropriate numbers and letters of image 180. The data entered by the player is displayed as shown in Figure 14. Each of displays 118, 118A and 134 can display an alphanumeric input image like image 180. Alternatively, the message shown in Figure 14 may be typed by the player or user by operating keypad 114.

[0061] Communication unit 119 generates a message based on the data entered by the player as explained in connection with Figure 14. The message includes an identification of the gaming location (e.g., 106) to which the message is to be sent or a player ID number. The message is transmitted via controller 148 and network 126 to central authority 120. If a player ID number was entered, central authority 120 checks the ID

numbers of players whose cards have been read by the system to find a match. If a match is located, the message is forwarded to the gaming location at which the card was read. If no match is found, the system stores the message in memory 121. When the player with the correct ID number inserts his card into a reader, the message is retrieved from memory and is forwarded to the proper gaming location for display. In addition, central authority 120 finds the name of the current user of gaming location 102 from the information on the club card 152 used to initiate the gaming location so that the name of the sender can be displayed at the gaming location receiving the message. If a gaming location was entered by the player, central authority sends the message to the proper gaming location, such as location 106, and displays on display 118A the name of the sender, the date, the time the message was sent and the message as shown in Figure 15.

[0062] Figure 15 illustrates the an exemplary message menu displayed on display 118A of gaming location 106 showing the message sent from gaming location 102 to gaming location 106 over network 126 through central authority 120. If a gaming location is entered by the player as explained in connection with Figure 14, the message may be sent directly from gaming location 102 to gaming location 106 without being transmitted to the central authority 120. The date and time at which the message was sent are displayed as shown in Figure 15.

Figs. 14-15 and paragraphs 0060-0062 teach that one player (e.g., John Doe) may be located by another player (e.g., John Smith) by sending a message. However, paragraph 42 teaches that the location of one player by another may be subject to a player authorizing such location. Thus, the combination of paragraphs 0042-0043 with paragraphs 0060-0062 teaches the subject matter in question of claims 64 and 65 (i.e., the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located by another player).

For all these reasons, claims 64 and 65 are in compliance with section 112.

Responding to the first paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action, the rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. The terms first and second menus have a complete antecedent basis in claim 1. The menus may come from a plurality of sources depending on the type of menu. The invention cannot be properly protected if the applicants are compelled to identify a particular source when a plurality of sources is supported by the specification. For these reasons, the applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Responding to the section 103 rejections, the rejection of claims 1-8, 12, 13, 15, 24-26, 29-31 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paulsen et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0054868 A1, "Paulsen 2003") in view of Paulsen (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0142846 A1, "Paulsen 2002") in view of Dubno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,722,053, "Dubno") is respectfully traversed. Currently amended claim 1 reads:

1. (Currently Amended) In a gaming system comprising a memory, a service station and at least a first gaming location enabling play of a game by a player, apparatus for enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location including a first display visible from the first gaming location and displaying a message unrelated to play of the game without interrupting the game comprising a first menu of services available for selection by the player, a second menu responsive to selection of one of the services available by the player, the second menu displaying a plurality of second menu items available for selection by the player, displaying a plurality of first menu items and a second third menu responsive to selection of at least one of the first second menu items by the player, the second third menu displaying a plurality of second third selection items available for selection ordering by the player from the service station depending on a preference of the player stored in the memory before the second third menu is displayed at the first gaming location, the first communication unit responding to a selection of a selected one of the third selection items by the player to enable an order of the selected third selection item from the service station;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the service station, including a second display visible from the service station arranged to display the order and an identification of the gaming location requesting the order, the second communication unit generating a message recommending an alternative to the player for display on the first communication unit if the order is unavailable; and

a network arranged to transmit data so that messages are displayed on the first display and the second display.

None of the cited references teaches or suggests such an arrangement of menus. The examiner relies on paragraph 66 of Paulsen 2003, which does not teach or suggest ordering anything. Regarding restaurant service, Paulsen 2003 displays only general types of food served, e.g., "Asian Cuisine." This display would not enable

ordering of any specific food item. Regarding reservation services, Paulsen 2003 allows only selection of a date and time, which result in a request for a reservation. A reservation confirmation message may be displayed, but could only be for date and time according to the available selections. This display also would not enable ordering of a specific reservation event.

The examiner takes the position that Paulsen 2003 teaches displaying a message unrelated to the play of the game without interrupting the game (referring to Figs. 1 and 3). The applicants respectfully traverse this position. The undersigned has been unable to find an express (or implied) teaching that such a message is displayed without interrupting the game. Paragraph 114 states that monitor 34 is used both to play a game and display game service interfaces. This statement suggests that the game is interrupted when game services are used.

Dubno teaches ordering food, but only when the game is interrupted. Nonetheless, the examiner states that it would have been obvious to include a second communication unit operable at a service station in the invention of Paulsen. This attempted combination is contrary to MPEP § 2143.01, which states that a proposed modification cannot change the principle of operation of a reference. As explained above, Paulsen 2003 does not teach that a service message is displayed without interrupting the game. Even if Paulsen 2003 had such a teaching (which it does not), it would be improper to combine Paulsen 2003 with Dubno, which expressly teaches that a game should be interrupted during display of a menu (Col. 4, lines 32-42). Thus, the Examiner's proposed combination changes the principle of operation of Dubno, contrary to the MPEP. Claim 1 is allowable at least based on the foregoing grounds.

Claims 2-7 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 8 has been canceled.

Claims 12, 13 and 15 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 24 has been amended in a manner analogous to claim 1 with respect to the grounds of claim rejection and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 24-26, 29-31 and 33 are dependent on claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24.

The rejection of claims 14, 16, 17, 38 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Paulsen 2003 and Paulsen 2002 in view of Dubno and in further view of Kirmse et al. (US. Patent Publication No. 2002/0086732 A1, "Kirmse") is respectfully traversed. Claims 14, 16 and 17 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 38 and 40 are dependent on claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24.

The rejection of claims 18, 19, 21, 22, 41, 42, 43, 45 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Kirmse is respectfully traversed. Claim 18 has been amended as follows:

18. (Currently Amended) In a gaming system comprising a first gaming location and a second gaming location, apparatus for enabling communication between the first and second gaming locations comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location and arranged to accommodate a first player, the first communication unit including a first display visible from the first gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a name of

~~a second player~~ a second player gaming location and a second player code and enabling entry of a first message apart from a previously stored list of names of possible recipients;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the second gaming location and arranged to accommodate a second player, the second communication unit including a second display visible from the second gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a ~~name of the first player~~ first player gaming location and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message apart from a previously stored list of names of possible recipients; and

a network arranged to transmit data resulting in display of a first menu including the first message and the name of the first player on the second display, the first menu enabling selection of a reply menu allowing the second player to enter a reply message to the first player, the network also being arranged to transmit data resulting in display of a second menu including the second message and the name of the second player on the first display, the second menu enabling selection of a reply menu allowing the first player to enter a reply message to the second player.

Kirmse does not teach or suggest a novel combination. The examiner relied on paragraphs 52-58 of Kirmse by which a player is limited to communicating with someone named on a previously stored list of "buddies" or "friends." Such an arrangement severely limits the recipients to which a player may send messages in a gaming system. By enabling entry of a gaming location or a player code apart from a previously stored list of names of possible recipients, any properly equipped gaming location can be accessed with a message. This is an advantage in the art over the system described by Kirmse and deserves patent protection. In addition, the

undersigned has been unable to find any reference to reply menus in the referenced paragraphs of Kirmse. For all these reasons, claim 18 is allowable.

Claims 19, 20 and 22 are dependent on claim 18 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 18

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